

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 10500 290739Z
ACTION HA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8739
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY MANILA
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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 10500

BANGKOK FOR REF:COORD.

SECSTATE FOR HA/ORM

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: M.V. SOUTHERN CROSS

REF: (A) CANBERRA 7946, (B) KUALA LUMPUR 10292 (NOTAL)

1. REFOFF SPOKE TO UNHCR REP. FOR EAST SOUTH ASIA
SAMPATKUMAR TODAY, UPON REP'S. RETURN FROM INDONESIA.
THOUGH SOUTHERN CROSS REFUGEES HAVE NOT YET BEEN MOVED
FROM P. PEHBIGU, SAMPATKUMAR SANGUINE THAT TRANSFER FROM
ISLAND WILL TAKE PLACE, BEFORE TOO LONG, TO MORE
ACCESSABLE LOCATION WITHIN INDONESIA.

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2. SAMPATKUMAR SAID THAT REFUGEES WERE NOT IN ANY PERIL
AND THAT THEY ARE BEARING UP WELL DESPITE PRIVATIONS
OF CORAL ATTOL. TWO WOMEN ARE DUE TO GIVE BIRTH AND
NUMBER OF AGED REFUGEES ARE REPORTEDLY GROWING WEAK.
UNHCR REP SAID THAT ANOTHER INDONESIAN NAVAL VESSEL
WILL ARRIVE AT ISLAND, WITHIN NEXT 24 HOURS, WITH
DOCTOR, WATER, AND RELIEF PROVISIONS ABOARD.

3. GENTS FOR M.V. SOUTHERN CROSS, SENG BEE SHIPPING, SINGAPORE, TOLD AUSTRALIANS TODAY THAT VESSEL HAD SUSTAINED STRUCTURAL DAMAGE AT THE ISLAND AND MAY REQUIRE ASSISTANCE OF INDONESIAN NAVY TO MAKE IT TO PORT WITH REPAIR FACILITIES. SHIP'S AGENTS, WHO MAINTAIN RADIO CONTACT WITH SOUTHERN CROSS, EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR WELL-BEING OF REFUGEES WHOM THEY SAY ARE SQUATTING ON ATTOL BEACH WITH OUT SHELTER FROM SUN AND RAIN.

4. HOPING TO SMOOTH WAY FOR PROMPT AND ORDERLY TRANSFER OF REFUGEES TO MORE SECURE ACCOMMODATIONS, SAMPATKUMAR HAS "MADE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS" AD HAS "PAID FUNDS INTO (INDONESIA) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS" FOR REFUGEES' CARE AND SUPPORT. HE NOTED THAT DEALING WITH BUREAUCRA-CIES VERY COMPLICATED AND ALWAYS PAINFUL. NEVERTHELESS, SAMPATKUMAR SAID, "THERE ARE NO MAJOR PROBLEMS", AND THAT WERE LOCATION OF SOUTHERN CROSS REFUGEES AND CIRCUMSTANCES USROUNDING THEIR ARRIVAL THERE NOT SO BIZARRE, TRANSFER TO TEMPORARY ASYLUM WOULD BE "MORE OR LESS ROUTINE."

5. SAMPATKUMAR HAS APPARENTLY, BEEN IN TOUCH WITH AUSTRALIANS WHO HAVE MOVED 50 PREVIOUSLY ACCEPTED REFUGEES FROM INDONESIA AND WILL PROBABLY MOVE ANOTHER 300 FROM JAKARTA AND PANJUNG PINANG IN NEXT FEW DAYS, CONFIDENTIAL

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REF. (B) IN ORDER TO MAKE ROOM FOR SOUTHERN CROSS REFUGEES. REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN ACCEPTING REFUGEES, SAMPATKUMAR SAID THAT HE HAS TALKED TO FRENCH AND CANADIANS ABOUT ACCEPTING REFUGEES FROM SOUTHERN CROSS AND THAT "THEY ARE READY TO POUNCE" ON AS SOON AS THE REFUGEES ARRIVE AT PLACE WHERE THEY CAN BE INTERVIEWED.

6. VERY MUCH APPRECIATE INSIGHTS AND INFORMATION REVEALED RE. (A) RE PARA (5), AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION AND IMMIGRATION OFFICERS HERE SAID THAT AUSTRALIA MAY ACCEPT AS MANY AS 500 REFUGEES FROM SOUTHERN CROSS. THOSE OFFICERS DO NOT SHARE UNHCR'S CONFIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT MATTER OF INDONESIA'S ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES FOR TEMPORARY ASYLUM WILL BE SETTLED WITHIN NEXT DAY OR TWO. REGIONAL IMMIGRATION OFFICER GIBBONS REPORTEDLY MAY ACCOMPANY SAMPATKUMAR TO JAKARTA NEXT WEEK TO JOIN LOCAL UNHCR REP RAJA IN DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI CONCERNING SOUTHERN CROSS REFUGEE ISSUE. MILLER

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